563 but also, as in the case of the Ukraine, because of the transfer of Poles and Hitler's extermination of the Jews.

Another important task resulting from the annexation of Western Byelorussia still remains to be carried out by the Government of the B.S.S.R. A large proportion of the Western Byelorussians have little or no Byelorussian national consciousness, and they speak some sort of [197] local Slav dialect which they themselves do not identify as Byelorussian. This applies in particular to the population of Polesia where Polish statistics counted over 700,000 such 'local Slavs'. 'Greater Byelorussia' is now about to round off the formation of a Byelorussian nation by amalgamating the various brands of Byelorussians, not only formally in a purely administrative sense, but also politically and spiritually.

177.56 563 [295] This process, intended to effect the transformation of the Western Byelorussians into a full 'sovietized' people, has encountered considerable opposition, particularly among the Roman Catholics who had formed 20 per cent of the entire Byelorussian minority of the former North-Eastern Poland. The Roman Catholic Byelorussians had always most violently opposed the thesis of the 'brotherhood' between Byelorussians and Great Russians and their political organization under the Polish régime, the Christian Democratic Union, significantly called itself 'Byeloruthenian' instead of 'Byelorussian'.

186 Byelorussian opposition to the Soviet régime is dictated not only by economic and religious motives but also by national considerations. Although it has united Western and Eastern Byelorussia, the Soviet Government has offended Byelorussian nationalism by leaving the city of Vilna outside the Byelorussian 'State'. The Western Byelorussians looked upon Vilna as their national cultural centre and there may have been indeed a good case for including it in Byelorussia, but it was politically more expedient to make it the capital of Soviet Lithuania.

The difficulties which the Soviet régime had to face in post-war Byelorussia were not confined to the new western territories. The whole of Byelorussia had been occupied by the Germans for two to three years, and it was only natural that Soviet propaganda had to start in many respects right from the beginning when the Red Army re-entered Byelorussian territory. A statement by the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party heralding the new propaganda campaign admitted indirectly that German Nazi propaganda had been successful among Byelorussians. The Communist Party organizations of Byelorussia were instructed in this statement to overcome 'the anti-collectivist and anti-state tendencies' with which the German occupants had indoctrinated the Byelorussian people.[35]

Many expressions of Byelorussian nationalism, however, existed quite independently of the moral consequences of German occupation. Judging by official Soviet admissions, Byelorussian nationalism, particularly